

Agency: Commerce, Community and Economic Development**Grants to Named Recipients (AS 37.05.316)****Grant Recipient: Affinityfilms, Inc.****Federal Tax ID: 92-0082476****Project Title:****Project Type: Planning and Research**

Affinityfilms, Inc. - Alaska Media Content Workforce Development

State Funding Requested: \$200,000
One-Time Need

House District: Anchorage Areawide (16-32)**Brief Project Description:**

This FY13 request will fund the training and workforce development of Alaskan writers in the development, crafting, and marketing of viable industry standard proposals for Alaska based episodic television.

Funding Plan:

Total Project Cost:	\$200,000
Funding Already Secured:	(\$0)
FY2013 State Funding Request:	<u>(\$200,000)</u>
Project Deficit:	\$0

*Funding Details:**FY13 \$200,000***Detailed Project Description and Justification:**

Since 2008 when the Alaska's film and television production incentive program became effective, Alaska has increasingly become an attractive production location. While the film and television production incentives have received a strong response from outside film and television producers, Alaska can do more to train up resident professionals so that more qualified local personnel can be integrated into the film and television workforce.

While Northern Exposure, an Alaska based series, was filming in Washington State, a sign at the show's opening read "Population 853". This was an inside joke among producers and crew because EACH WEEK of production for the series brought in a steady \$853,000 to the local economy.

Episodic television can drive the development of a local crew base and be a key component in the development and investment in infrastructure. The best example of the potential benefit of episodic television is Hawaii's experience with ABC's hit show "Lost". In 2009 alone "Lost" created 1,305 jobs, and in the first five seasons of production, producers spent more than \$400 million in Hawaii. The steady work created by "Lost" was instrumental in building Hawaii's skilled workforce and crew base. Additionally, "Lost" was an anchor tenant for the development of critical infrastructure and rental of necessary equipment from local businesses.

Developing our workforce includes developing our "above-the-line" talent. Film and television productions often bring content developed outside to Alaska. However, Alaska has more published writers per capita than anywhere else in the

country. Episodic television development is a specialized craft and Alaska's writers need training from professional television series writers and developers.

This project will work to develop Alaskan writers and support them in the complex process of the development, crafting, and marketing of viable, industry-standard proposals for Alaska-based television series. Additionally, the project will involve public presentations and workshops under the tutelage of successful professionals. The end result of these workshops will be four to six viable Alaska based television series proposals that will be marketed to major US and international producers and financiers. Costs for travel and presentations are included in our budget.

The sponsoring organization is well-established (over 30 years as Alaskan nonprofit media production and education organization) and has produced feature documentary films such as About Face: The Story of Gwendelwyn Bradshaw, as well as Survive and Thrive and two independent narrative features Pen Pals, and Tuesday Morning Coffee. Affinityfilms, Inc. has brought in such noteables as John Sayles for screenwriting, USC's Margaret Mehring for screenwriting, Sandra Ruch for international documentary filmmaking and Chat Gunter for production sound. Affinityfilms, Inc. is financially sound, respected in the local film industry and noted for educating and working with Alaskans through mentoring partnerships with successful professionals from Outside. It is an organizational goal to develop meaningful television in our state, with writing as our expertise.

Project Timeline:

August 2012 - September \$25,000

2012 Selection of the final writing team to work with the professionals. Selection of and contract with industry mentors. Secure location.

September 2012 - December 2012 \$145,000

Immersion "Writers Workshop" (Mentor fees, travel and writers stipends)

January 2013 - May 2013 \$30,000

Travel to pitch our series proposals, re-write and present to international markets

Entity Responsible for the Ongoing Operation and Maintenance of this Project:

Affinityfilms, Inc.

Grant Recipient Contact Information:

Name: Mary Katzke
 Title: Executive Director
 Address: 1012 Potlatch Circle
 Anchorage, Alaska 99503
 Phone Number: (907)250-6897
 Email: marykatzke@gci.net

Has this project been through a public review process at the local level and is it a community priority? ☐ Yes ☒ No



January 25, 2012

To the Esteemed Members of the Alaska State Legislature:

I am writing to you in support of your inclusion of a line item in the capital budget for the Affinityfilms project to develop a "Writers' Stable" within Alaska. This project would help local writers – who have already shown great talent – receive the mentoring and support needed to develop their skills as television and film screenwriters. Mentors from New York and Los Angeles would act as advisors to guide these writers not only in creating the material but also in the areas of travel, marketing, and pitching scripts and series ideas. This has happened in the past but in a much less organized or comprehensive manner. Alaska has an incredible talent pool and we would be providing opportunities not only for individuals but for the nascent Alaskan film industry as well.

I have been a Board member of Affinityfilms for nine years and I can attest to the many projects undertaken in the areas of production development in terms of raising the levels of expertise in the film industry, not only within the organization, but across the state. The films and workshops they produce are excellent and have a distinguished record within and outside of Alaska

As an executive with an Alaska Native Village Corporation, I can attest to the genuine need for the work produced by Affinityfilms. The Alaska Native culture along with the challenges and amazing history and contributions of our Native peoples has yet to be fully explored – especially by an organization that truly understands their importance. It is my belief that Affinityfilms will include all aspects of our great state's population in their nurturance of the development of a television series based here. Too often stereotypes are encouraged by industry professionals not truly in touch with who we are and I trust Affinityfilms to bring truth to the screen in their artistry.

Please let me know if I can provide any more information or answer any questions about this project. I am convinced that this effort will reap rewards not only for the participants but for the Alaska's newfound place in the film world. Affinityfilms is an organization dedicated to excellence and to tackling challenging issues and projects.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Peggy O'Keefe
Peggy O'Keefe, SPHR

VP Human Resources – Chenega Corporation

3000 C Street, Suite 301; Anchorage, Alaska 99503



LETTER OF SUPPORT

DEAR ALASKA STATE LEGISLATORS:

ONE OF OUR STATE'S RICHEST RENEWABLE RESOURCES IS THE CREATIVITY OF OUR WRITING COMMUNITY. AS THE FILM INCENTIVES THAT YOU HAVE ENACTED TAKE ROOT, WE RECOGNIZE THE NEED FOR ALASKAN WRITERS TO RECEIVE QUALITY INDUSTRY TRAINING. WE HAVE THE TALENT HERE IN THE GREAT LAND, BUT WE SORELY LACK BOTH THE EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES AND INSIDER ACCESS THAT AN ALL-ALASKAN TELEVISION SCREENWRITING PROGRAM COULD PROVIDE.

WE AT THE 49 ALASKA WRITING CENTER FULLY SUPPORT THE IDEA OF A WRITERS' STABLE, OPERATED BY AFFINITY FILMS. AFFINITY FILMS IS A RESPECTED AND PROVEN ORGANIZATION THAT IS CLEARLY DEDICATED TO ALASKA AND ALASKAN WRITERS.

OUR ORGANIZATION IS EXCITED ABOUT THIS OPPORTUNITY AND WE APPLAUD YOU AND THANK YOU FOR YOUR EFFORTS TO SUPPORT BOTH ALASKAN FILMMAKERS AND ALASKAN WRITERS.

SINCERELY,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Don Rearden". The signature is stylized with a large, looped "D" and a long, sweeping underline.

DON REARDEN

BOARD PRESIDENT, 49 WRITERS

(907)301-5315

DONREARDEN@GMAIL.COM

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PO Box 221086 | ANCHORAGE AK 99522
HTTP://49WRITERS.BLOGSPOT.COM |
WWW.49WRITINGCENTER.ORG

27 January, 2012

The Alaska State Legislature
Juneau, Alaska

Dear Legislators:

I would like to offer this letter in support of Affinityfilms' new venture in developing Alaskan writers for an ongoing television series. We have seen how outside writers come in and try to tell the stories of our unique and singular home - and very often fail to get it right. As attention on and interest in Alaska continues, I strongly feel that we should be able to step forward and take a lead role in telling our own stories.

I have made my living as a screenwriter for 20 years, dividing my time between Juneau and L.A. (but mostly being in Juneau) and have seen first hand the interest in our state, particularly in light of the tax incentive program we now offer for shooting in Alaska.

We have programs in place to train sound engineers, camera people, transportation and catering crews... and we all know that Alaska abounds with talented actors. But the script is where it all begins. It would be great to have a stable of good, trained writers right in our own state.

Thank you very much for your interest in this matter.

Sincerely,

Dave Hunsaker

Dave Hunsaker
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January 4, 2012

Dear Sir or Madam:

Rasmuson Foundation has been proud to support Affinityfilms, Inc. over the past ten years as they work to enrich our Alaskan society by working on topical subjects ranging from special needs to child development to cancer. They have also provided useful workshops to the community on subjects such as screenwriting, documentary film marketing, and production sound. The Foundation has provided a fellowship to director Mary Katzke, as well as equipment grants which are used in their productions.

In our experience, the Affinityfilms' team has demonstrated the tenacity and talent necessary for achievement in a very challenging medium. The quality of their work has steadily advanced as they have studied and applied national standards to their work for Alaska. They have routinely mentored fledgling filmmakers through hands-on internships for our state's young people.

Please join us in supporting the continuation of the valuable work produced by Affinityfilms, Inc.

BOARD of
DIRECTORS

Edward B. Rasmuson
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Lile R. Gibbons

Linda Leary

Anthony Mallott

Roberta Quintavell

Cathryn Rasmuson

Judy Rasmuson

Mary Louise Rasmuson

Natasha von Imhof

Best regards,

Diane Kaplan
President

PRESIDENT
Diane Kaplan

1/26/2012

TO: Members of Alaska State Senate
Members of Alaska House of Representatives

FROM: Mary Pignalberi, Principal
MP Media

Mary Katzke of Affinityfilms has submitted a grant proposal to the Legislature for the development of a television series based in and about Alaska and accompanied by a goal of utilizing experienced and talented Alaskan writers. I am writing in support of this proposal – “Writer’s Stable for Television Series Development”.

Ms. Katzke is a long time Alaskan, filmmaker and owner of Affinityfilms. She has won several awards for producing feature documentaries focused on substantive issues. She is a professional and production executive of the highest caliber and integrity with the necessary talent and skills to develop a successful television series.

I managed the “original” Alaska Film Office from 1983 to 1999. During the late 80’s, Ms. Katzke was instrumental in bringing award-winning independent film Director, John Sayles, to Anchorage. The Film Office assisted in sponsoring a well attended workshop whereby interested Alaskans learned the ins and outs of location filming. Mr. Sayles ultimately returned in 1998 and filmed his movie, “Limbo” entirely on location in Juneau.

As you know, establishment of the Alaska film tax incentive program has brought renewed attention to and interest in filming here. Projects deliver opportunities for job creation and infrastructure development. The economic impact and promotion of Alaska on the screen are also hugely significant! Particularly, in the instance of an episodic television series which sustains year-round employment for Alaskans.

I appreciate your consideration of Ms. Katzke’s grant proposal. Thank you very much.

Ron Holmstrom

415 D Street #4
Anchorage, Alaska 99501
907-748-5729

holmstrom@alaskalife.net

Dear Alaska Legislators,

As the first Alaskan ever elected to national office with Screen Actors Guild, (SAG,) I would like to express my enthusiastic support for the Alaska Writers Stable for Episodic Television being developed by Affinityfilms, Inc.

It is only through programs such as this that our new film industry will continue to grow and boost our economy. With the influx of major feature films, independent productions and television programs being produced here, national interest in all things Alaskan has never been higher.

While these productions are very important to the success of our growing local entertainment industry, a weekly television series created and produced by our deep Alaskan talent pool would be a huge economic boon to our state.

Even though these productions contribute millions to Alaska's economy, the real profits from distribution and sales of these programs come through distribution and ancillary sales which go directly to the Outside production companies who come here to film. Locally-produced films and programs mean that the true profits come right back into our local banks.

Further, and most importantly, a locally-produced television series will generate well-paying jobs for writers, our Alaska actors and the many crew positions and support industries that are necessary to a major production. Having worked in network television during my long tenure in Hollywood, I can assure you that landing a job on a series is akin to the Holy Grail of industry employment: Great salaries, job security, health care and benefits.

Since my re-election last year to SAG's Regional Branch Division, I now also serve on the SAGIndie Committee, which encourages, supports and helps to guide independent film makers; exactly the sort of program which Affinityfilms now proposes.

It is my hope that the legislature will support this effort to continue to build a viable multi-million dollar industry here. Let's put Alaskan's to work!

Sincerely,

Ron Holmstrom

Ron Holmstrom
Alaska Representative
Seattle Branch Council
Screen Actors Guild

Andromeda Romano-Lax
PO Box 233394
Anchorage AK 99523
lax@alaska.net
(907) 348-6096

January 26, 2012

To: Alaska State Legislators

I am writing as a member of the professional writing community and as a supporter of Affinityfilms, Inc. In a broader sense, I am an Alaska resident who is thrilled to see our state enhancing its diversified, long-term development by attracting more filmmaking to the state.

I have been a full-time professional writer for more than twenty years, with over a dozen fiction and nonfiction books in print. I write in more than one genre and have done some work in the documentary field (I am currently working on a film for the USDA/US Forest Service that will be shown at Begich-Boggs Visitor Center) as well as some script work for Evergreen Films. I co-founded a statewide literary nonprofit called 49 Writers, Inc, and I teach for that organization. If more opportunities were created in the Alaska film industry, I would possibly benefit as an apprentice screenwriter. But more importantly, I would benefit as an Alaskan, because our state is made stronger by economic diversification and cultural enrichment. Furthermore, we deserve to have an economic and creative role in telling the stories of our state.

My closest connection with Affinityfilms, Inc. came when they were producing the excellent and moving documentary, "About Face: The Story of Gwendellin Bradshaw." I was so impressed by both the film and by Mary Katzke, the woman behind the film, that I lent my own professional and financial support to the project. Filmmaking is an expensive, long-term, collaborative effort, and I witnessed the strengths demonstrated by Mary Katzke and Affinityfilms, Inc.: strengths in terms of long-term vision; communication, organization, fundraising, and networking; and a combination of artistic and business abilities without which a film cannot be developed and completed, much less shared with the public.

Mary Katzke of Affinityfilms, Inc. is a tenacious, committed, and exemplary member of the film community. I am happy to recommend Affinityfilms, Inc. as a partner in any statewide screenwriting or film industry effort.

Please feel free to contact me with any questions.

Andromeda Romano-Lax

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To: Mary Rosanne Katzke

February 6, 2012

I was excited to hear that you were putting together a writer's stable here in Alaska. As you know there is abundant talent that could make use of a creative writers think tank here in this state.

Over the years I have witnessed your ability to coordinate local skilled videographers, writers, grip and lighting people and put together award worthy documentaries and films. I have no doubt that you will head up a much needed writers stable. From Alaska, you and your developing team could get contracted to write works that can reach all over the world.

You have my support and I look forward to utilizing your services for Tribal Archives and other business developments in the works.

Sincerely, George Sikat III, Founder of Tribal Archives



Prudential Jack White/Vista Real Estate

3801 Centerpoint Drive, Suite 200

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907 562-6464 Fax 907 562-5485

www.prudentialjackwhitevista.com

Janet Gellert, CRS,GRI, Associate Broker

Prudential Jack White Vista Real Estate

February 23, 2012

3801 Centerpoint Drive

Anchorage, Alaska 99503

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing a letter of support for Affinityfilms, Inc, owned by Mary Rosanne Katzke, to receive a capital grant to develop TV writers.

As I have been helping people to buy and sell real estate in Alaska since 1980, I can see the benefits to more people having stable incomes here. If film workers have a regular job on a TV series, they will be more able to purchase homes, and not only will the real estate business then benefit from this action, but more industry in Alaska will benefit us all. Alaskans who are working steadily in the film business because they are working long term on a television series set here will spend more money in Alaska. Another benefit to the property management part of the Real Estate Business would be from servicing film crews when they are in town.

In addition, I support the development of Alaskan writers to develop this business – so the money earned will stay in Alaska if written by Alaska writers.

Thanks very much for your consideration to obtain a small capital grant to provide in-depth training for Alaskan writers wishing to write for episodic television.

If you have further questions, please contact me @ 907-273-7714.

Sincerely,



Janet H.E. Gellert

VisionScapes Studio

David Cuddy, President
1900 Stanford Drive Anchorage, Alaska 99508
512 668 4346/907 278 0941
david@studioestates.biz

2.22.2012

Dear Alaska State Legislators:

I was asked, as a producer, if there might be value in increasing the ranks of script writers in Alaska.

I am presently putting together the "book" for soliciting distribution for a television series based on the characters and location of "Christmas with a Capital "C"." I want to bring this series to Alaska. I spent an hour on the phone yesterday with the original writer and co-producer

who live in LA. It would have been nice if the writer lived in Alaska, knew Alaska, and could meet with me face to face to review character back stories and possible story lines. I will have to educate this writer about the character of Alaska and Alaskans. I suggest that appropriate story lines would be easier to come up with, and would be more genuine for an Alaskan production if writers were from Alaska.

I am also presently finishing the script for our third in the series of "Mark" films...to be filmed in Budapest in May. It would have been helpful if my writer was from Alaska...considering all of the time I spend on the phone working on notes and re writes for the script and the "table read."

The more people who are Alaskans who are "above the line," the better for Alaska and for the financing of the Alaska produced projects. This includes writers.

Story is everything. Good writing is the most important aspect of film making. My main role in film making is development...development of good stories, cast selection, distribution, budgets and profitability, location scouting...everything right up to the first day of production. I would welcome an expanded list of good screenwriters in Alaska.

David Cuddy
Visionscapes Studios